(b) and (c) The Union Government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States Environment Protection Agency (USEPA) in the year 2002 under which bilateral cooperation is going on in various environmental sectors such as Air and Water Quality Management, Management of Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Wastes, Pollution Prevention and Control, Environmental Governance, Environmental Monitoring and Assessment etc. On 2nd April, 2007, the MoU has been extended further, by mutual consent for a further period of five years, by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and the USEPA.

Protection of river Ganga

485. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that River Ganga is among the ten rivers in the world which are going to be dried up in the nearest future;

(b) if so, the action which is proposed to be taken by Government for the protection of River Ganga and to protect the fertility of the land for proper agricultural production;

(c) whether other rivers in the country are also affected in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) In a report entitled "World's top 10 rivers at risk", the WWF, an International Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), has listed the river Ganga as one of the World's ten rivers facing risk. The Central Government is not aware of the data-base and the methodology adopted by the said NGO for making this Report. The report profiles the biodiversity of river Ganga, and perceives over extraction of water for agriculture and excessive water diversions affecting natural flows as major threats to the river. The Report does not consider other Indian rivers as facing danger of getting dried up.

The flows of river Ganga are being monitored by Central Water Commission (CWC) under the Ministry of Water Resources at various places on regular basis. The last point is Farakka Barrage after which the river enters into Bangladesh. As per the flows measured during the lean season (1st January to 31st May) at Farakka Barrage, the flows of the last five years are quite comparable with the long term flows (1949-88). There is no apparent reduction in the available water in river Ganga at this terminal point even during the critical season. The CWC pursues an approach for integrated and coordinated development of surface and groundwater resources and their conjunctive use. The CWC has formulated a National Perspective Plan for water resources development in the country that envisages inter-linking of rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit basins for optimum utilization of water in the country. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, various works are undertaken for pollution abatement in major rivers including Ganga through interception and diversion of sewage for its treatment and construction of Sewage

Treatment Plants and Low Cost Sanitation. Under the Ganga Action Plan-(GAP) Phase I & II, 1747 mld. (million litres per day) of sewage treatment capacity has been created so far. With the pollution abatement works completed so far under Ganga Action Plan, the water quality of the river Ganga has shown discernible improvement at major locations over its pre-GAP quality as per the water quality monitoring undertaken by independent reputed institutions in the country. The National Environment Policy, 2006 also advocates an integrated approach for management of river basins by the concerned river authorities, ensuring maintenance of adequate flows, adherence to water quality standards throughout their course in all seasons and protection of land resources.

Aid by the United Nations for plantation of trees

486. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large amount of aid has been received each year from the U.N. and other institutes for plantation of trees in the country to check the global warming;

(b) if so, the total amount which has been received and utilized during the last three years;

(c) whether it is also a fact that some States have not adequately utilized the funds; and

(d) if so, the steps Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) No aid has been received by Government of India from the UN and other institutes for plantation of trees in the country to check the global warming.

(b) to (d) Do not arise

Lack of intelligence network in Gir and surrounding areas

487. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Gujarat forest officials hardly have any intelligence network in Gir and surrounding areas where lion carcasses have been found in April, 07;

(b) if so, the reasons for the forest officials who did not take preventive measures when specific information was given by the local (Bhanderiya) villagers regarding the suspects who where set free, and later on, these suspects were found to be involved in poaching activities; and

(c) the number of Gir lions which have been poached during the years 2005 and 2006?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) As per the information received from